WHITEHORSE MINING INITIATIVE

WORKPLACE/WORKFORCE/COMMUNITY
ISSUE GROUP

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INTRODUCTION

In September 1992, at the *49th Annual Mines Ministers Conference* in Whitehorse, Yukon, the Mining Association of Canada (MAC), on behalf of its member companies, as well as provincial and territorial mining associations/chambers, presented a brief reviewing the serious challenges facing the minerals and metals industry in Canada.

Recognizing the need for the mineral industry "to earn the trust of Canadians and to prove that it can operate in an environmentally sensitive and sustainable fashion", the MAC proposed the launch of a multi-stakeholder process to develop a common vision and strategic plan that would take the metals and minerals sector into the next century.

The proposal was endorsed by the Mines Ministers, and on March 30, 1993, the Whitehorse Mining Initiative (WMI) was launched at the annual Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada Convention. Other stakeholders who had been identified and who had agreed to participate include: federal, provincial and territorial governments; business, including the banking community; Aboriginal groups; environmentalists; and labour. The immediate objective was to design a consultative process to address key issues affecting both the industry and the other stakeholders.

The objective of the WMI is to move toward a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable and prosperous mineral industry, underpinned by political and community consensus.

The WMI is spearheaded by a Leadership Council composed of government ministers and senior executives and officials from each of the sectors. The Leadership Council is coordinated and supported by a Working Group, also composed of representatives from each of the participating sectors, although at the senior working level. Four multi-stakeholder issue groups were formed to address the four main issue areas identified as being important to the mineral industry. Finally, a secretariat was created to play an overall coordinating and support role for all of these bodies. The secretariat is responsible for supporting and coordinating the issue groups and assisting them in the preparation of their final reports.

The four issue groups were created to address the following topics:

- land access
- environmental management and regulations
- finance and taxation
- workplace/workforce/community.

The Workplace/Workforce/Community (WWC) Issue Group held its first meeting[1] in September 1993, where members representing government, labour, Aboriginal, and management interests considered a range of issues and defined their mandate. Around the time of this meeting, an extensive report[2] on human resources issues in the mining industry was released. The study recommended the formation of a mining Sector Council to deal with human resources issues in a structured manner.

At its September 1993 meeting, the WWC Issue Group reviewed the range of potential issues that fell under the general heading of workforce, workplace and community. It was noted that there was considerable overlap between those issues and the issues that the Sector Council, if created, would address.

Accordingly, because there appeared to be a strong commitment for the creation of a Sector Council, a decision was made by the Issue Group to focus on three areas that would reflect the interests of the stakeholders within the WMI timeframe:

- development of a national set of standards to encourage worker training and mobility as well as to ensure that the mine is a safe work environment;
- the impact of mining on community stability; and
- cultural awareness and communication efforts to ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equal access to industry opportunities.

The WWC Issue Group developed a work plan. First, it reviewed the present-day situation of the three topic areas; it then defined its objectives to improve the current situation; explored the issues and impediments that would have to be resolved if those objectives were to be reached; and finally, suggested possible recommendations. The Issue Group then broke into subgroups and continued defining, clarifying, and improving the background, objectives, issues/impediments, and recommendations of the three topic areas over a series of meetings during a nine-month period -- reaching consensus in June 1994.

Authored by the members of the Workplace/Workforce/Community Issue Group, this report and its recommendations to the Leadership Council are a product of those meetings and reflect the consensus of all those Issue Group members who participated.

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[1] For a list of participants in the Workforce/Workplace/Community Issue Group, please see Appendix 1.

[2] *Breaking New Ground: Human Resource Challenges and Opportunities in the Canadian Mining Industry* was prepared for the Steering Committee of the Human Resources Study of the Canadian Mining Industry and was released in the summer of 1993.

CHAPTER 1

STANDARDIZATION OF REGULATIONS

A. Training and Certification of Vocations in the Mining Industry

1. Background

A skilled, well-trained, available and mobile workforce is an essential ingredient to the success of any industry in Canada. This is particularly so with respect to the mining industry because of the finite life of ore bodies and the often remote locations of mines.

The public is not generally knowledgeable about employment opportunities in mining in terms of being well-paying and interesting work. The image of mining has to be improved if the mining industry is to retain and attract motivated and skilled workers. Training opportunities, including apprenticeships, need to be maintained and expanded to ensure the continuation of a skilled workforce.

2. Objectives

The following objectives have been developed for standardizing regulations for vocations in the mining industry and increasing the awareness and profile of mining careers.

1. Improve the mobility of workers employed in the industry by developing a well-trained workforce with portable skills that are recognized inside and outside the industry.

2. Develop strategies to increase training opportunities in the mining industry.

3. Improve access to training -- especially for young people living close to mining communities.

3. Issues/Impediments

The following issues and/or possible impediments have been identified regarding standardizing regulations for training/vocations in the mining industry and increasing the awareness of mining careers.

1. Lack of national occupational standards is a general problem:

   a) there has yet to be a consensus in the various jurisdictions across the country about what constitutes a trade or, for that

matter, what constitutes a skilled vocation in mine or mill operating jobs;

b) also of concern is the defining of occupational standards for professionals, trades, and other vocations.

2. There is lack of uniformity in curricula from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, making it difficult for workers to transfer and maintain continuity in their training:

   a) training and certification attained in one jurisdiction is not necessarily recognized in other jurisdictions across the country.

3. Completed high-school grades do not accurately measure basic literacy and numeracy skills, nor do they accurately reflect what is truly required to be successful in the working environment:

   a) the issue is further complicated by the fact that kindergarten to graduation educational standards are not consistent across Canada; leaving industry uncertain about what level of achievement actually exists, and individuals, at times, discovering that they do not have the requisite education.

4. In apprenticeships, there is a tremendous waste of the human resource in Canada because of the poor transition from school to workplace:

   a) typically, a starting apprentice is in his or her late twenties;

   b) there is a backlog of persons, within the industry, waiting to train as apprentices;

   c) there is a need to expand opportunities to allow these backlogs to be reduced, and to start to train younger apprentices so they can move smoothly from school to work.

5. Access to training is difficult for those living in remote communities and/or working shift and/or rotational schedules.

4. Recommendations

The following recommendations have been developed for standardizing regulations for training/vocations in the mining industry and increasing the awareness of mining careers.

1. National occupational analyses should be revised, updated or developed as necessary to establish appropriate occupational standards for relevant Red Seal trades, for underground, open-pit and mill-skilled occupations and for professional and supervisory positions.

2. Governments are encouraged to use occupational analyses to design curricula content and sequencing that is consistent nationally:

    a) it is recognized that the in-school portion of apprenticeship training is the responsibility of the provinces and the territories;

    b) the Core Programs developed for underground mining in Ontario and the Open Pit Job Training Series developed in British Columbia could be used as a basis for curricula development and training, and could logically lead to the establishment of trade vocations in these spheres of work.

3. For the trades, promote the expansion of the Red Seal designation:

    a) do the work necessary to develop certain mining and mill jobs as trades, which would then qualify for inter-provincial certification;

    b) support the development of the Inter-provincial Computerized Examination Management System (ICEMS) as a means of achieving inter-provincial standards;

    c) business and labour should be the major force in establishing standards for mining occupations.

4. For other vocations and operating jobs that are not at a "trades" level:

    a) identify common skill sets which cut across different vocations and jobs within the mining industry;

b) encourage business and labour to develop training - recognized nationally - for such jobs, vocations and skill sets.

5. To ensure that artificial barriers to employment opportunities do not occur:

a) develop and use entrance examinations for apprenticeships and other vocations that are based on the knowledge and aptitude required for successful completion of training;

b) unsuccessful candidates should be counselled, prior to revisiting the examinations, to allow for future success.

6. Promote cooperation between industry and educational institutions:

a) support programs that are designed to initiate apprenticeship training while students are still in high school;

b) industry should support initiatives such as cooperative education and school-to-work programs that allow students to explore career interests.

7. Promote the development and use of distance education (e.g. interactive television courses, correspondence courses, etc.) to provide entry training, apprenticeship training, and supervisory skills training.

B. Standardization of Regulations for Health and Safety in the Mining Industry

1. Background

Much has been accomplished with respect to health and safety in the mining industry over the past several years. Due to its high priority, however, it must be recognized that health and safety is an area which demands continuous improvement to accommodate changing technology, and that some jurisdictions have not updated their health and safety regulations as quickly as others.

2. Objectives

The following objectives have been developed for standardizing regulations for health and safety in the mining industry.

1. Consistent access for workers to a safe work environment which is regulated and based on modern standards.

2. A regulatory framework for health and safety which is:

   a) similar in each jurisdiction;

   b) jointly developed by government, industry and labour.

3. A core set of national standards concerning health and safety regulations for the mining industry in Canada which:

   a) encompasses all forms of mining in Canada;

   b) respects the regulatory process in each jurisdiction;

   c) includes the use of modern technology.

3. Issues/Impediments

The following issues and/or possible impediments have been identified regarding standardizing regulations for health and safety in the mining industry.

1. Ineffective coordination exists between some governments and some government departments both at the federal and provincial/territorial levels.

2. Jurisdictions that have recently changed or updated legislation/regulations have found it to be a long process and may not be enthusiastic about re-opening reviews.

3. The consultation process is costly, and all parties are currently exercising fiscal restraint.

4. Inter-provincial jurisdictional barriers:

   a) there is a reluctance among some jurisdictions to utilize ideas from other jurisdictions because of a belief that their own legislation is the "best";

   b) because health and safety issues generally fall within the provincial/territorial jurisdictions, provinces/territories may feel that if they adopt national regulations then they are

giving up the ability to make unilateral change.

5. Representatives of employees (i.e. labour) and/or employees themselves are concerned about the lack of standardization.

6. There is a perception or belief on the part of some companies that:

   a) they are already meeting or exceeding required health and safety requirements -- accordingly, additional regulations or restrictions for health and safety reasons simply constitutes "change for change's sake";

   b) because certain types of accidents have not occurred on their work site or within the jurisdiction in which they are operating, developing new regulations for th[illegible] jurisdiction to deal with such types of accidents is not necessary.

7. Governments often take a reactive rather than a proactive approach to new health and safety regulations (e.g. they wait until a certain type of accident occurs in their jurisdiction before enacting a regulation directed towards the prevention of that type of accident).

4. Recommendations

The following recommendations have been developed for standardizing regulations for health and safety in the mining industry.

1. All stakeholders should support, encourage and participate in the development of a standardized set of mine regulations that encompass all forms of mining in Canada.

2. A committee of all stakeholders should be formed to concentrate on developing a standardized set of health and safety regulations for the mining industry, based on "best practices". The Association of Chief Inspectors of Mines should be involved in setting up this committee:

   a) this would mean taking the best practices achieved under existing regulations from the provinces, territories, and other sources and making those the national standard for the industry;

b) this should include a framework for seeking variances for site-specific reasons.

3. An internal educational program within the mining industry should be initiated to explain that health and safety regulations contribute to cost efficiency:

   a) a program should be developed to ensure that all parties understand that regulations are proactive rather than reactive;

   b) it is important that the industry avoid waiting for major accidents or fatalities to occur before introducing rules to remove the hazard(s).

CHAPTER 2

COMMUNITY STABILITY IN THE MINING INDUSTRY

1. Background

For communities with a diversified economy, when a decline occurs in one segment of their local economy, other vital segments remain to ensure their stability. Communities dependent on mining, however, like most other single-industry communities, are less secure. Mining communities depend on an industry that is highly vulnerable to economic fluctuations. Further, unless a new ore body is found in the area, the mine(s) that the community depends on for its livelihood will eventually close. Currently, over 150 communities in Canada are partly or totally dependent on mining.

Although a permanent mine closure is inevitable, many communities have a difficult time accepting the end of the economic life of the local mine. This is especially true if mining has been part of a community's historic past. As a result, some mining companies and communities do not undertake adequate long-term planning for closure. There are cases, however, where planning has led to successful results. One such case is the closure of the Brenda Mines Ltd. open-pit copper and molybdenum mine and mill in Peachland, British Columbia. While the mine closed permanently in June 1990 due to ore exhaustion, planning for closure began three years earlier. It included the design of a detailed action plan, a request by the mining company for federal industrial adjustment assistance, and the involvement of the entire community in the closure and adjustment process through the use of videos, tours of the mine operations, and employee involvement. Peachland, which had a population of 3,000 people in 1986, experienced a growth in population by 1992. Retirement and recreation replaced mining as the main industries in the region.

There are also communities that are not themselves mining communities, but are partially dependent on mining operations because of the number of residents who commute to mine jobs. The challenges posed by single-industry communities have led to increased use of long-distance commuting (LDC) employment, particularly in the more remote parts of Canada. LDC employees spend days or weeks at a mining operation, working long shifts and living in company-provided lodgings, followed by a similar or shorter period at their home communities.

While this system avoids many issues associated with single-industry communities, it introduces a new set of issues and problems. Longer rotational periods and shift cycles can lead to social consequences with implications for employees' health, family life, productivity, absenteeism, and health and safety. As well, this system could lead to "fly-over" effects where workers and communities close to the mining operation do not benefit from the operation because it is serviced from more distant centres.

Much of the discussion, and many of the recommendations in this section, relate to issues surrounding permanent mine closure and its impact on community residents and workers.

2. Objectives

The following objectives have been developed for community stability in the mining industry.

1. To generally discourage the construction of any new single-industry communities except where unique circumstances demonstrate that positive, long-term economic and social benefits will occur.

2. Ensure that communities close to mineral developments benefit from that development.

3. Minimize the social consequences and "fly-over" effects of long-distance commuting (LDC) operations.

4. Ensure that notice of a mine closure is given as far in advance as possible.

5. Minimize the impact of a permanent mine closure on workers and communities.

6. Ensure that information on government programs for workers and community adjustment is available and easily accessible.

7. Protect workers' pensions and workers' housing investments.

8. Minimize the effects that unemployment and taxation policies can have on severance and compensation packages to employees affected by permanent mine closure.

9. Reduce the uncertainty and disruption of temporary mine closures on workers and communities so that longer-term impacts can be minimized.

3. Issues/Impediments

The following issues and/or possible impediments have been identified for community stability in the mining industry.

1. The establishment of a new mining community to develop a mineral resource represents a significant investment for a mining company, governments, local businesses, and individuals who are drawn to the community for employment:

   a) once established, the community becomes vulnerable to international commodity price and demand fluctuations, structural changes, and resource depletion;

   b) this often leads to social and economic hardship for the workers and community when the mine(s) they are dependent upon for their livelihood shuts down periodically, downsizes or closes.

2. The consequences of establishing single-industry communities to develop mineral resources have led to greater use of long-distance commuting (LDC). LDC avoids many of the issues associated with single-industry communities; however, it introduces a new set of issues and problems:

   a) some communities do not wish, or cannot accommodate, growth resulting from workers moving into a community to participate in LDC mining;

   b) management approaches adopted at LDC operations, such as choice of rotation period and shift cycle, need to consider employees' health, family life, productivity, absenteeism, and health and safety.

3. The "fly-over" effect:

   a) workers and communities close to an LDC mining operation can fail to gain benefits from the project if the operation draws labour and/or other services from more distant communities or larger urban centres;

   b) choices made by operators reflect differences in local labour supply and the commuting arrangements they adopt;

   c) a lack of infrastructure can prevent Aboriginal communities from participating in employment opportunities associated with LDC mining.

4. Predicting the economic life of a mine can be difficult:

   a) few mines are opened with a finite life expectancy clearly defined;

   b) as a result, a company facing permanent closure of its mine(s) must decide when to give notice of mine closure to its employees (respecting any notice of termination legislation).

5. Notice of group termination of employment legislation varies among provinces/territories, and the size of operation:

   a) Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Prince Edward Island have no provisions in this area, whereas in British Columbia 18 weeks' notice is required for operations with more than 300 employees.

6. Inadequate notification can lead to social and financial hardship for workers, and feelings of betrayal from community residents:

   a) advance notice of closure is a key element to successful labour adjustment: It enables workers to plan their futures, begin job searches, and negotiate severance packages with their employer.

7. Some mining companies, communities, and employees and their representatives as well as some government agencies do not have proactive plans in place to deal with the wind-down and eventual closure of mining operations.

   a) when closures do occur, the impacts on the workforce and the community are more devastating than they need to be.

8. Mining communities sometimes wait until the mine ore body is exhausted, or an announcement of imminent closure is made, before examining diversification options:

   a) short lead times can hinder the success of efforts to diversify, particularly in cases where the potential may have been quite favourable.

9. Workers' skills and training may not be portable within the industry or across sectors:

   a) this makes it difficult for workers to take advantage of employment opportunities elsewhere;

   b) skills may be too narrow in range and too specific to the needs of a particular mining operation;

   c) efforts to upgrade and broaden these skills usually do not occur until workers are faced with a closure situation;

   d) some members of the mining workforce lack basic academic skills.

10. A worker's pension is usually not portable from one employer to another.

11. Local businesses do not always become fully involved in a community's response to closure:

   a) they have as much at stake as the workers and other stakeholders in the community dependent on the closing mining operation.

12. Many communities, particularly those in the more remote areas, may not have sufficient access to information on government programs and often are not aware of the type of assistance that may be available to them to deal with closure and other community adjustment issues.

13. Workers and local community business operator's investments:

   a) when a mine closes, whether suddenly or planned, home owners and business operators are sometimes left holding properties whose values have severely depreciated.

14. While there are government adjustment programs available for workers and communities, the flexibility and eligibility rules of some of these programs may make them ineffective.

15. During periods of low metal prices or other economic factors, mining companies may be in a situation where serious consideration is given to shutting down a mine(s) for an extended period:

    a) such a shutdown can lead to dislocation of the workforce, community disruption and, perhaps, costly maintenance to the infrastructure.

4. Recommendations

The following recommendations have been developed for community stability in the mining industry.

1. Provincial and territorial policies which state that no new single-industry communities be built except where circumstances demonstrate that positive long-term economic and social benefits will occur, should be encouraged and supported.

2. When undertaking new LDC mining projects, mining companies should seek to draw labour resources from, or house workers in, nearby communities, where those communities are willing and able to accommodate growth, to ensure that the economic benefits of a mining project are shared with those communities.

3. Mining companies using LDC should adopt management practices that minimize the negative social effects that some practices (such as choice of rotation/shift patterns) can have on employees and their families:

    a) mining companies and governments should set up support mechanisms, such as life-skills training, and employee and family assistance programs, where such programs do not currently exist.

4. Aboriginal communities should be assisted in developing appropriate infrastructure to ensure that Aboriginal peoples can participate in LDC employment.

5. Considering that circumstances of individual mine closures may vary widely, mining companies should notify employees and their representatives of a permanent mine closure as far in advance of the closure as possible.

6. A formal strategic plan should be developed by those communities significantly affected by a mining operation:

   a) this should apply to both existing mine operations as well as new mining operations;

   b) one of the objectives of the plan should be to ensure that all stakeholders are well informed about the life cycle and likely economic spin-offs of the mine;

   c) the mining company, its employees and their representative(s), the community and government should jointly participate in the development of the plan;

   d) the plan should be developed at the earliest opportunity;

   e) the plan should address, as a minimum, the development, operation and closure phases of a mine and community economic diversification;

   f) the plan should provide for regular reviews which are carried out in an open fashion involving all stakeholders.

7. Increased exploration activity should be encouraged in areas surrounding mining communities:

   a) the exploration activity should not be limited to the type of mineral deposit currently being mined in the community (e.g. looking for more of the same mineral) - such exploratory activities should seek to identify other types of commercially viable mineral deposits;

   b) this could be accomplished through increased and focused field work by government geological surveys, enhanced government incentives for exploration, and joint ventures/cooperation within the private sector.

8. Federal and provincial governments should set up an information network/database to provide communities with access to the full range of government programs available for community adjustment and diversification:

a) best-case practices and community "success stories" would also be included to assist mining operations and communities in their long-term planning.

9. All stakeholders should examine the feasibility of pension portability, recognizing that this is a complex issue which extends beyond the mining sector.

10. In single-industry communities where a mine is facing permanent closure and the value of real estate in the dependent community would be adversely affected, mining companies and employees should, where appropriate, negotiate a form of compensation for any employee equity in such housing.

11. In the event of a mine closure, government should provide continuing support for training and educational programs developed and initiated during the operation of a mine. This support would include the financial support necessary to allow people who are already enrolled in training or educational programs the opportunity to complete the program.

12. Current tax policies should be reviewed:

    a) governments should review tax policies to minimize the negative effect that these tax policies have on severance and other compensation packages received by workers when a mining operation closes permanently;

    b) to help employees with adjustment, mining companies and governments should provide information on taxation issues.

13. The federal government should review its eligibility criteria for benefits under the *Unemployment Insurance Act* so that severance packages received by workers do not disqualify them from receiving unemployment insurance benefits.

14. Governments, mining companies, employees, suppliers and affected communities should look at ways, through consultation and negotiation, of avoiding or preventing temporary closure, recognizing that preventing temporary closure may not always be possible or feasible in every case:

a) this could be accomplished through the appointment of an independent facilitator to act as a broker or deal-maker to bring people together in a non-adversarial fashion. An example of this is the work presently done by the Job Protection Commissioner in British Columbia;

b) once a mechanism is agreed to by all stakeholders to deal with temporary closures, it should be included in the community's formal strategy plan.

CHAPTER 3

ABORIGINAL PARTICIPATION IN THE MINING INDUSTRY

1. Background

Aboriginal communities affected by mining operations do not always benefit from the industry. Aboriginal communities have been isolated or overlooked by the mining industry and rarely benefit from the spin-off contract opportunities (e.g. cleaning, manufacturing garments, transportation, etc.) associated with the mine due to a lack of communication and understanding. The Aboriginal workforce in the local communities becomes involved primarily in the low-skilled and labour-intensive activities.

Now, all parties associated with the mining industry are beginning to recognize the fact that Aboriginal peoples will become more involved in all facets of the industry because, for the most part, the mining industry is now moving into their (the Aboriginal) backyard. This creates a new set of questions of how the mining industry will deal with such items as Aboriginal land claims and treaty rights.

It should be understood that the workplace/workforce/community issues pertinent to the Aboriginal community are often the same issues faced by the general population when dealing with the mining sector. The following objectives, issues, and recommendations regarding the Aboriginal component of the WWC Issue Group are sometimes similar or identical to the other objectives, issues, and recommendations put forward throughout the workplace document. The duplication is not to be interpreted as redundancy, but is intended to support the position of the Aboriginal community on this specific issue. In addition, it should be understood that, although the Aboriginal community may share many similarities to other communities affected by mineral development, there are also many major differences that must be recognized. Because of this, the WMI Workplace Issue Group has developed separate recommendations for Aboriginal participation in mining activities.

It should also be noted that the following section will also be incorporated in the Aboriginal mining policy paper being developed by the Canadian Aboriginal Minerals Association (CAMA) on behalf of the four major national Aboriginal political organizations. It is understood and agreed that the discussions and recommendations in this section are without prejudice to new and existing land claim agreements and ongoing treaty negotiations.

2. Objectives

The following objectives have been developed regarding Aboriginal participation in the mining industry.

1. Increase the participation (and therefore the employment and economic opportunities) of Aboriginal peoples in all sectors of the mining industry -- particularly where it applies to employment and workplace.

2. Reduce barriers -- both real and artificial -- to education, workplace, and economic opportunities that often prevent the Aboriginal peoples from reaping the full benefits that the mining industry has to offer.

3. Increase the understanding and awareness of the mining industry regarding Aboriginal issues, needs, and concerns as well as increasing Aboriginal understanding and awareness of the needs and concerns of the mining industry -- eventually leading to a relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples that is based upon the principles of partnership.

4. Improve the flow of communication among all stakeholders to ensure that misunderstandings that have been prevalent in the past do not continue into the future.

3. Issues/Impediments

The following issues/impediments have been identified regarding Aboriginal participation in the mining industry.

1. There is a lack of open and constant communication among all parties.

2. There is uncertainty associated with land claims settlement:

   a) a lack of understanding exists, when consulting with specific Aboriginal communities, regarding sensitivities associated with land claims, Aboriginal rights, and treaty rights;

   b) often, time lines will be altered to accommodate the settlement processes that may have an impact on the mining industry's schedule.

3. Real and artificial barriers exist:
   a) there is a lack of cultural awareness among the parties involved;

b) artificial barriers can play a decisive role in deciding the extent of Aboriginal participation in a mining operation.

4. Early assessment of the workforce needs -- associated with a mining operation and an appreciation of the Aboriginal workforce in the area -- is rarely done:

   a) proper lead time for training, which would allow the Aboriginal workforce to benefit from the mining operation, is often not available.

5. Industry-driven educational initiatives to assist the Aboriginal community are geared towards low-skilled, labour-intensive areas.

6. The difficulty involved in trying to change people's "attitudes" when dealing with Aboriginal peoples.

4. Recommendations

The following recommendations have been developed for the topic of Aboriginal participation in the mining industry. They relate to mine developments situated on or near Aboriginal land or having an impact on specific Aboriginal communities.

1. Aboriginal communities and the mining industry should develop, with the assistance of governments, a joint comprehensive employment and training plan commencing during development feasibility stage:

   a) a skills assessment of Aboriginal peoples in communities should be undertaken and include equivalency and aptitude testing:

      i) where necessary, these tests should be used to identify the additional education/training required to meet educational prerequisites for employment. Government(s) and/or the industry should sponsor such education/training;

   b) where appropriate, modifications should be made to the delivery of existing apprenticeship programs to meet the needs unique to Aboriginal peoples, provided that such modifications meet the criteria of apprenticeship programs anywhere in Canada;

c) where the school system in an Aboriginal community does not provide for graduation from secondary school, the mining industry should strongly support/encourage programs or initiatives that address the systemic reasons resulting in Aboriginal communities not being able to provide for graduation within the community;

d) to ensure maximum benefit to Aboriginal community members, the community, together with government and industry, should prepare a complete training plan which relates to the mining operation and future community initiatives;

e) employment opportunities for Aboriginal peoples should be integrated into all sectors of the mining industry, including management;

f) at the earliest time possible prior to operations, general employment descriptions should be provided to the Aboriginal community;

g) mining companies should actively recruit Aboriginal students as part of their hiring policies for summer students;

h) an emphasis should be placed on regular skills upgrading, combined with an effort on transferability and advancement.

2. Exploration companies should:

a) provide the earliest notification possible to the Aboriginal communities prior to commencing post-staking (or equivalent) exploration;

b) maximize the use of the available Aboriginal workforce and businesses.

3. Mining companies should ensure that a proactive approach is taken to incorporate the involvement of local qualified and competitive Aboriginal businesses in all sectors of the mining operation:

a) the mining company should cooperate with the economic development component of the Aboriginal community to design a community business strategy that enhances the existing businesses' ability to meet the needed demand and may include setting aside a small percentage of goods and services required by the mining company for bidding by qualified and competitive Aboriginal businesses;

b) the company and the economic development component of the Aboriginal community should develop new business activities related to the mining operations that are geared towards maximizing local economic benefits;

c) the strategy should allow existing Aboriginal businesses the appropriate time to prepare for the new mining business.

4. Mining companies and exploration companies should promote an Aboriginal community presentation/orientation at the post-staking (or equivalent) stage of exploration and development, inviting Aboriginal community members to participate in mine development by announcing/posting available potential business spin-off benefits.

5. The feasibility of providing mining companies with incentives, such as tax benefits or other means, to spend money on education/training initiatives for Aboriginal peoples, should be explored.

6. Aboriginal communities should offer their expertise and knowledge to the mining company regarding all government-sponsored or supported programs applicable to Aboriginal peoples:

   a) this knowledge transfer would have an emphasis on applicable programs involving training, education, environment, and business/community development.

7. Operating mines should have an Aboriginal liaison position to deal with all parties at an operations level with respect to cultural issues related to employment, training, etc:

   a) in most circumstances, it would be desirable for this position to be occupied by an Aboriginal person;

b) in addition to this liaison person, there should be a senior executive of the mining company (CEO, vice-president) who, along with his/her existing function(s), is tasked with Aboriginal affairs;

c) the Aboriginal liaison person would have direct and full access to that senior executive;

d) where there is not an Aboriginal person occupying a senior management position in a mining company, the company should be encouraged to promote a suitably qualified Aboriginal person into a senior management position.

8. Mining companies anticipating or presently involved with Aboriginal communities should promote cross-cultural awareness training:

a) such training should be offered to and attended by all employees, including management and labour representatives.

9. Aboriginal communities should develop a comprehensive profile of the community:

a) this profile should include: human resource and business inventories; community services; and other related information;

b) this profile should be made available to government, company, and labour so they would have quality information for planning and development;

c) the human resource inventory should identify individuals within the community with university, college, or some other formal training.

10. Aboriginal communities should incorporate a significant internal education and support process to orient and prepare the community for the coming mine development and operation:

a) besides introduction and orientation, the Aboriginal community would stimulate participation by providing ongoing education and training counselling, recruitment

and employment services, and life-skills and retention education.

11. Where not presently provided for, government agencies mandated with the responsibility for mineral development should provide a general mining education program to Aboriginal communities:

    a) this program would include basic information pertaining to mining within the area, as well as the potential benefits for the community and its members;

    b) the delivery of the program(s) would be done with the participation of provincial/territorial and federal governments;

    c) to help eliminate any barriers that might exist, Aboriginal community or area members would assist in the delivery of the program;

    d) the nature and desire of the community would determine if education is applicable, and how much education is needed.

12. In the event of a mine closure, government should provide continuing support for those Aboriginal programs and initiatives developed and initiated during the operation of a mine. This support would include the financial support necessary to allow people already enrolled in training or educational programs the opportunity to complete the program.

13. Recognizing that organized labour may be involved as the bargaining agent for a group of employees at a mine, labour should work together with the Aboriginal community to educate and communicate what the role of a union is in a mining operation.

APPENDIX 1

WMI Workplace/Workforce/Community Issue Group Members and Other Participants

1. Issue Group Members

Tony Amyotte
United Steelworkers of America

Lyle Bear
Cogema Resources Inc.

Richard Boyce
United Steelworkers of America

Robert Campbell
Canadian Council for Aboriginal
Business

Marc Couse
Ministry of Northern Development and Mines
Government of Ontario

Jacques Hudon
Mining Association of Canada

Kenneth Hughes
Noranda Sales Corp. Ltd

Alan Jones
Human Resources & Development
Government of Canada

John Keenan
Falconbridge Limited

Glenn Kendall
Natural Resources Canada
Government of Canada

Albert LeClair
Potocan Mining Company

Stu Mathieson
Cominco Limited

George Patterson
Department of Energy, Mines & Petroleum Resources
Government of the Northwest Territories

Francois Pelletier
Quebec Cartier Mining Company

Thomas Reid
United Steelworkers of America

Dave Turner
Department of Safety and Public Services
Government of the Northwest Territories

Gordon Williams
Treasury Board
Government of Canada

2. Other Participants

Yiota Kokkinos
Natural Resources Canada
Government of Canada

3. Process Support

Lois Hooge
Head
Secretariat
Whitehorse Mining Initiative

Dan Johnston
Facilitator
Sutherland, Johnston and MacLean

Gary Thain
Group Coordinator
Whitehorse Mining Initiative

Wendy Wesley
Secretarial support
Whitehorse Mining Initiative

Marc Zwelling
Facilitator
Vector Research + Development

4. Observers and Resource People

Ed McCloskey
Ministry of Labour
Government of Ontario

Warren Holmes
Falconbridge Limited

Doug Wiley
Echo Bay Mines

Diane Purdy
Alberta Energy and Mines
Government of Alberta

Jerry Kozubal
Department of Human Resources and Labour
Government of Canada

Pierre McNeil
Noranda Minerals Inc.